

June 6, 2007

Dear Interested Citizen:

You are invited to attend a community forum entitled ***“Impacts of Corporate Timberland Ownership Change in the Upper Peninsula”*** to take place on Thursday, June 21, 2007 at the UPPCO Building in Houghton. Funding for this forum is provided by People and Land (PAL), a project of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The forum will present findings of research conducted by Michigan Technological University and Michigan State University during last fall and winter. The findings indicate that Michigan’s Upper Peninsula forestlands are undergoing a dramatic transformation in land ownership and economic makeup. More than one million acres of UP corporate forestland changed ownership in 2005 and 2006, primarily from landowners directly tied to forest products industries to large forestland investors.

While the long-term implications of such dramatic and large-scale changes in UP ownership remain unclear, many perceive an increased risk of large-tract forestlands being parceled into smaller ownerships. This People and Land project focused on a central question of land use in the UP: How will such changes in ownership of large-tract forestland affect wildlife habitat, public access and the economy? The answers have significant importance for residents, businesses, the forest products companies and seasonal visitors to the UP, where outdoor pursuits and the access to timberland have historically been linchpins of the lifestyle and the economy.

The forum will examine ownership changes and present scenarios for possible landscape fragmentation, discuss the role of the forest products industry in the UP economy; and explain existing tools and strategies currently available to help support the sustainability of contiguous, large-tract forestland ownership. Some large corporate landowners will present their perspectives on these issues. Finally, we will engage in a dialogue that will include identification of local issues and opportunities and potential strategies and recommendations for future actions.

You have been identified as an important stakeholder in your community. Please attend this important event to learn more about changes in forestland ownership and their potential implications for the UP.

The seminar will run from 8:45 am to 3:00 pm. Breakfast and lunch will be served. If you are personally unable to attend, you may send a representative. To reserve your place at the forum, RSVP by calling or emailing:

**Sue Haralson at the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District
(906) 482-0214 or sue.haralson@mi.nacdnet.net**

Hope to see you there!

*For more information and to read the draft report, visit our website:
<http://forestlands.mtu.edu>*

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